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National Historical Intelligence Museum Resolution

Mr. Chairman:

I want to thank you for this opportunity to give you my views on the Senate Resolution to support the establishment of a National Historical Intelligence Museum. I am truly moved by this resolution's recognition of those Americans who have worked and sacrificed, from the first days of our republic, to give our government the intelligence it has needed to prevail in war and to remain secure in peace.

CIA is a young organization, going back only to 1947, and its World War II progenitor, OSS, goes back only another six years to 1941. But American intelligence did not begin with OSS or CIA. As the resolution notes, General George Washington organized and relied upon a variety of intelligence activities in leading the 13 American colonies in the long war for independence, whose happy ending 200 years ago we celebrate this year.

I have done some research and writing on the American Revolution and I claim that my first predecessor as director of American intelligence was not Admiral Sidney Souers, who was appointed Director of Central Intelligence by President Truman in 1946, but George Washington who appointed himself.

How did Washington's ragtail army, some 6000 to 8000 men for most of the war, defeat what was then the most powerful nation in the world? Second only to Washington's qualities as a leader in this achievement were his natural aptitude as a director and practitioner of intelligence and special operations and a master of what we know today as guerrilla warfare.

The earliest predecessor of this Committee was the Secret Committee created by the Continental Congress for the covert procurement of arms in September of 1775, and in November the Committee on Secret Correspondence for the purpose "of corresponding with our friends in Great Britain, Ireland and other parts of the world."

To these Committees the Continental Congress appointed its strongest members--Benjamin Franklin, Robert Morris, Silas Deane, John Jay, Benjamin Harrison, Richard Henry Lee, John Dickinson. But it was Morris, Franklin and Deane who did the work.

Under the authority of these Committees, Benjamin Franklin and Silas Deane carried out the first American special operation in arranging the clandestine acquisition and financing in Europe and shipment to America of the weapons needed to sustain the American Revolution.

To meet his needs as Commander in Chief, Washington gradually developed a working intelligence network and became his own intelligence chief.

The intelligence process consists of three broad steps--the collection which is the identification and collection of the information relevant to planning decision, production which is the evaluation and analysis of information drawing inferences and conclusions from it and relating it to planning and decision, and dissemination which is conveying facts and conclusions to commanders and policymakers needing them.

It is no exaggeration that Washington himself performed all of these functions. In his letters time and again he specifies and pleads for the kind of information he needs to estimate the enemy's plans and intentions.

The analysis and interpretation of the facts collected for him takes place in his own mind and his massive correspondence was a major means of conveying relevant information to his commanders and the Congress.

These special operations and intelligence activities and the deception which enabled Washington to keep his tiny force alive and ultimately defeat the trained British army in Yorktown were critical to winning independence. This has continued down to this day notably in the reading of German messages, the deception which kept 15 German divisions away from the beachhead at Normandy and the development and support of French resistance forces which protected the flank of the Third and Seventh American armies as they liberated France.

It is important to our national spirit that all this be remembered by our people. It is important to the future of the American Intelligence Community that the interest and understanding of young people be engaged in the challenge and opportunity of these activities at an early age. It is important that the American public recognize and understand the importance of intelligence, and for this the public needs information and education about the role of intelligence in our nation's history. And as this resolution suggests, one highly important way of educating and informing the public is to establish a national museum where "intelligence objects of historical interest" can be collected, preserved and exhibited to the public. I am grateful that all of you on this Committee have joined your Chairman in sponsoring this resolution to establish a museum that will commemorate the contributions of thousands of men and women to American intelligence since 1775.

In inviting me to testify today, Mr. Chairman, you and your Vice Chairman asked for my thoughts not only on the importance of having such a museum -- which I have just shared with you -- but also on what might be included in it, and on how I think that such a project might be carried forward. Since the question of what such a museum should contain depends to a considerable degree on how it is set up, I might first comment on the kind of institution that I believe is envisioned.

At the outset I can say that I am glad that the movement to establish a National Historical Intelligence Museum is a private initiative. I think its advocates are right in wanting to create a public -- but not governmental -- museum. I agree with those who hold that it would probably not be appropriate for CIA, the Intelligence Community as a whole, or the Federal Government to fund or administer such a museum. Such a museum should be entirely free of the constraints of national security classification; that is, all of its holdings should be freely accessible to the public. It should also be independent in managing its own affairs, especially in deciding what it wished to exhibit. For these reasons it should not be an appendage or adjunct to CIA or other organizations in the Intelligence Community. Indeed, for such a museum to depend upon intelligence agencies for funds, exhibits and direction might encourage the public to believe that it was merely a government public relations operation. Thus, I find myself in sympathy with the proponents of this museum who believe that the general public interest, the functional requirements of intelligence work, and the benefits of freedom from official constraints, all argue for an independent museum. Having said all this, I can immediately add that CIA, and I am sure other components of the Intelligence Community as well, will be glad to support and cooperate with a National Historical Intelligence Museum in every legitimate way we can.

This brings me to the question of what should be included in such a museum. Here I should focus principally on what might be expected to come from CIA and the Intelligence Community. Here I must say frankly that what CIA can contribute will almost certainly be quite limited. This is first because we do not have many objects or artifacts that could be exhibited in a museum: we mainly produce paper, and the release to the public of some of our records is, I think, a separate issue. Beyond this, our need to protect our sources and methods means that we must keep much of our material secret for very considerable lengths of time, sometimes long after the actual substance of a report may be general knowledge. Within these constraints, however, there are some things that we could offer to such an historical museum. We have, for example, been able to release U-2 photography to the John F. Kennedy Library for its documentation of the Cuban Missile Crisis. We have also given the Smithsonian Institution related U-2 material for exhibits there. We have shared with the public the results of applying advanced photo interpretation techniques to World War II aerial photography, by releasing detailed analysis of Nazi death camps and evidence of the Soviet massacre at Katyn. While I am confident that we can continue to release this kind of intelligence material from time to time, I would not want to mislead anyone into expecting us to be a major source of exhibits for this projected historical intelligence museum.

Indeed, it seems to me that while artifacts and intelligence and other historical documents would be an essential component of an intelligence museum, most of the presentation and much of the interest would be created by exhibits showing in a historical context how intelligence contributed to desirable military and political results. I have in mind how Washington succeeded in getting the British commander in New York to bring back forces from Virginia to New York City by feinting an attack on New York City as he and General Rochambeau marched their forces through Westchester County in New Jersey and down through Virginia. This story can be told with legends on maps accompanied by actual messages and orders which are historically available. The same kind of thing can be done with the deception which kept 100 miles north of Normandy the 15 German divisions which could have pushed our forces back into the English Channel. Also the supply of French resistance to create a threat to develop protection for General Patton's flank as he raced up the route of Napoleon from the Mediterranean to Grenoble. Some of the accommodations of _____ and messages could demonstrate the value of commanders reading the orders from Hitler to General Vancleave in directing our forces to deal with the German counteroffensive in Normandy and come within a hair of encircling the German seventh army before it could escape back to Germany. I have visited intelligence and resistance museums which have been established and ~~our~~ are functioning in Oslo in Norway, in Copenhagen in Denmark, and in Paris in France. I was told in Norway just a week ago that the resistance museum receives more visits than any other tourist attraction in Norway, including the major Viking ships and the Contike raft and ~~the~~ other dramatic exhibits in Norway.

In conclusion I am grateful for the opportunity to testify before you today, and for the support all of you have shown by joining your Chairman in co-sponsoring this important resolution.